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A
LETTER
To the REVEREND
Dr. *Edward Tenison,*

CONCERNING
Some Citations made from his Grace
the Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury's Preliminary Discourse to the Apostolical Fathers, &c.*



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To the REVEREND

Dr. Edward Benson,

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In a Paper lately published, intituled,

A LETTER to the Reverend the Prolocutor : *Being an Answer to a Paper, &c.*

By the Author of that LETTER.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS at the *Oxford-Arms*
in *Warwick-Lane.* 1718.

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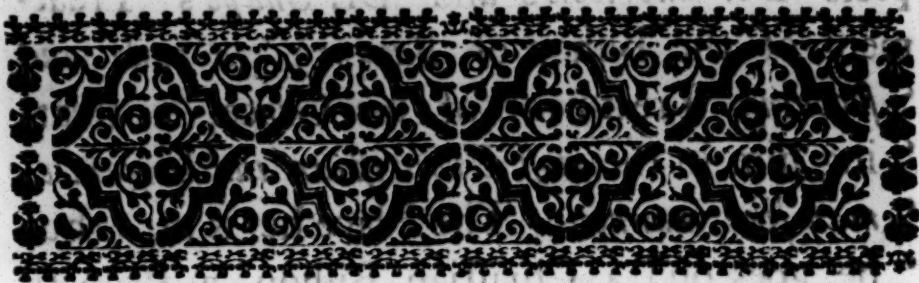
In a Paper lately published, intitled,

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fessor: Being an Answer to a Pa-
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By the Author of the LETTER.

LONDON.

Printed for J. Roberts in the Strand,
in Water-Lane. 1775.



A
LETTER
To the REVEREND
Dr. Edward Tenison, &c.

Dear SIR,

Cambridge, June 7th, 1718.



Am obliged to you, for sending me the Copy of a Letter to you, complaining of Unfairness in my Citations from the Arch-Bishop's *Preface to the Apostolical Fathers.*

Your Correspondent 'thinks me Criminal, in
' mis-representing his Grace's Words, at least
' as they stand in his Revision of them in the
' Second Edition of that Book in 1710.' This
he terms (in the Words used by me to ex-
' press

press Dr. *Sherlock's* and Dr. *Snape's* Treat-
 ment of the Bishop of *Bangor*) ' a rude and
 ' *shocking* Treatment of his Grace, a treat-
 ' ing him in the *most Unchristian and Ungentle-*
 ' *man-like manner*. The Place he is in, (thus
 ' he goes on) a Christian Bishop, a Primate
 ' of the *English* Church, surely adds to our
 ' Duty to treat him with *Candor and Respect*.
 ' So much his Grace may claim as a private
 ' Christian of every professed Christian. But
 ' God knows where the Spirit of Bitterness
 ' and ungoverned Zeal will stop. I wish we
 ' may not at last weary the Patience and Long-
 ' suffering of God, in thus turning our Holy
 ' Religion into a Firebrand of Hell for Con-
 ' tention, and provoke Him to give us up to
 ' the Superstitious Cruelty of those that hate
 ' us.

Never was Complaint so groundless. What
 have I done to deserve it? I have taken no-
 tice, in the tenderest manner I possibly could,
 of what I thought a Mistake of no small Con-
 sequence, published by a Person since advanced
 to the highest Dignity of the Church; and
 which I feared might be of the more dan-
 gerous Consequence, the higher the Station,
 and the greater the Authority was of its De-
 fender.

fender. I hope there is nothing in this but what a *Christian* and a *Gentleman* may do. 'Tis our Duty to treat a Christian Bishop with *Candor* and *Respect*; but not to sacrifice an *Important Truth* to a Point of Ceremony. A Deference is due to the Primate of the *English Church*; but *Amicus Aristoteles, magis Amica veritas*; A greater Deference must be paid to TRUTH, than to the greatest Man alive.

Your Correspondent may learn from the Report of the Committee against the Bishop of *Bangor*, that 'tis to be apprehended the Eminence of a Bishop's Station and Character, will help to spread the ill Influence of a False Doctrine farther than it would otherwise go; and that therefore such a Doctrine is not to be the less, but the more heartily opposed, the more pernicious it may be upon Account of the Authority of an Episcopal Defender.

To take notice therefore of an Opinion which is conceived to be of no less ill Consequence than the adding, without any sufficient Warrant, to the Canon of Scripture as received by Protestants, and so making a new Rule of Faith, is far from deserving the Name of *Un-*
governed

governed Zeal. 'Tis a just and commendable Zeal to be alarmed at an Apprehension of the Rule of Faith being altered. And defending it as received in all Protestant Churches, if it be done without Bitterness or Abuse, with Candor and Respect, is neither Unchristian or Ungentleman-like. Christianity does not forbid us to endeavour to confute an Error, nor Good-manners require that we should prefer Authority to Truth.

Had I told his Grace on this Occasion, that but for fear of the Engines of this World, I would have given him all the odious Names that a Spirit of Bitterness and ungoverned Zeal could inspire: That ' I must act with
' regard to my own Safety, and not presume
' the Secular Arm would not be called upon,
' should I happen to break into those Privi-
' leges and Immunities within which he is so
' conveniently intrenched, or let fall any such
' unwarrantable and obnoxious Appellations as
' my Inward Conviction and Private Belief
' might suggest *: I might then have been
charged with treating his Grace in a *rude and*

* See Dr. Snape's First Letter to the Bishop of Bangor, p. 6.

shocking manner, neither Christian nor Gentleman-like. But I am not conscious to my self at present of having done any thing that can justify such a Charge upon me. My Private Belief does not suggest to me any odious Appellations of his Grace; or if it did, I would never insinuate that *Fear* only kept me from venting them. It was my Opinion that his Grace had advanced an Error, not with any ill Design or unjustifiable Intent, but being led into it by Mistake and inconclusive Arguing; which is what no Writer is safe from, and what is excused by the universal Infirmary of Human Understanding.

Your Correspondent has informed me, that in a *Second Edition* of his Book, his Grace has corrected this Error: And yet, tho' he owns he had Reason to suppose I made use of the First Edition, he makes it *Criminal* in me that I represented the Arch-Bishop's Words as I found them in that Edition, and not as they stand Revised in the Second Edition. ' I could not be ignorant, he says, that a Second Edition of that Book was published in 1710.' I own, I was not ignorant that there was a Second Edition: But I was ignorant that his Grace had in that Edition corrected his Error.

I never saw more of that Edition than the Title Page, 'till I saw your Correspondent's Letter. I must own, I did not so far agree with his Grace, concerning the Inspiration and Value of the Writers he has translated, as to think it necessary to have two Editions of his Book. His Grace's having corrected his Error, is so far from making my Behaviour, in opposing that Error, which I did not know he had corrected, *Criminal*, that I take it to be a great Justification of what I have done. I am glad, for the Honour of his Grace, that he has corrected it ; and I am glad of this Opportunity to let the World know, that his Grace is not ashamed of, nor above retracting any Erroneous Opinion, upon better Information. I cannot but congratulate my self, upon having noted those very Passages in his Grace's Writings as Erroneous, which I find his Grace, after Seventeen Years Consideration, has thought fit to correct, as not being defensible ; which I declare I was entirely ignorant of at the time of my observing those Errors. I wish his Grace had thought fit to make more Alterations in that Chapter.

One Observation occurs to me upon this Occasion, which is, That it is as well a more just, as a more honourable Way of dealing with the World, for any Person, let him be ever so Great, who has propagated an Error in it by his Writings, to make a Publick Declaration of his Retracting his Error, upon Information ; than for him to content himself with omitting or correcting it in another Edition. A Publick Declaration, at once reverses all the Influence his Error may have had : But making Emendations in another Edition, is not making sufficient Satisfaction to the World, but only to some few Persons. Those who have the First Edition will hardly be at the Expence of a Second : And I make no doubt but Multitudes of others are still ignorant (as I was) that his Grace had corrected these Errors in his Second Edition. Justice therefore seems to require a more Publick Retraction than this.

I shall, in my own Defence, set before you the Passages I cited, as they stand in each Edition.

The first, p. 23 of my Paper, was from p. 158 of the First Edition. The whole Sentence is as follows, and is not altered in the Second Edition.

‘ So that here then we may read with Security, and, let me add, with Respect too; and not doubt but what these Holy Men deliver to us, is as certainly the true Doctrine of Christ, as if we had receiv’d it, like them, from our Saviour and His Apostles.

The next was from p. 160, which stands too unaltered in the Second Edition: The whole Sentence is,

‘ It is plain, that we cannot with any Reason doubt of what they [the Apostolical Fathers] deliver to us as the Gospel of Christ, but ought to receive it, if not with equal Veneration, yet but with a little less Respect than we do the Sacred Writings of those who were their Masters and Instructors.

Thus far then there was no Mis-representation.

The next was from p. 164. The Sentence is thus, unalter'd in the Second Edition too, as far as I cited it. ' What they teach us, is
 ' *not to be looked upon as a mere Traditionary*
 ' *Relation of what had been delivered to them,*
 ' *but rather as an Authoritative Declaration of*
 ' *the Gospel of Christ to us.*' Thus far I quoted. Your Correspondent complains, that I did not add what follows; ' tho' indeed as
 ' much inferiour to that of the Apostles and
 ' Evangelists, as both their Gifts and Com-
 ' mission were inferiour to theirs.' Second Edition, p. 115. In the First Edition it was,
 ' their Gifts and Assistances were less than
 ' theirs.

It was not at all necessary for me to add this: Tho' indeed, in the View in which I was considering those Passages, it might have been to my Purpose to have shewn here too, that his Grace contradicted himself in the self-same Passage, by affirming the Writings of the Apostolical Fathers to be an Authoritative Declaration, and yet not to be an Authoritative Declaration. For if it is inferior to that of the Apostles, 'tis not Authoritative: If it be Authoritative, 'tis not inferior to theirs. There

is

is no Medium. But I did not then think my self obliged, any more than I do now, to take notice of all the Contradictions I saw in that Chapter.

The two next References to *p.* 171, 172, and to *p.* 175, are not Quotations (as your Correspondent mistakes them to be;) they are not marked as such with “: But they are what I take to be, in short, the Sense of the two next Quotations in my Pages 24 and 25. The first, for which I refer to *p.* 171, 172 of the Arch-Bishop, I take to be the Sense of the Passage cited from those Pages in my 24th Page. The second, for which I refer to *p.* 175, I take to be the Sense of the Passage cited from that Page in my 25th Page. I had in my Manuscript made References to express this more plainly, which not being understood by the Printer, were omitted, as was, upon the same Account, the Reference to Pages 171, 172. from which the Quotation in my 24th Page is made. This was corrected in the *Errata*: But the Corrector neglected inserting the other.

The

The first of those Propositions is, That the Writings of the Apostolical Fathers *are Inspired, tho' not of equal Authority with the Scriptures.* This is the Sense of what is cited p. 24. I shall insert the Sentence as it is in the First Edition, whence I cited it, and as it is now altered in the Second Edition.

First Edition.

“ It remains then,
 “ that the Holy Men,
 “ whose Writings are
 “ here subjoined, were
 “ not only instructed
 “ by such as were
 “ Inspired, but *were*
 “ *themselves Inspired*
 “ *too.* And therefore
 “ we must conclude,
 “ they have not only
 “ not mistaken the
 “ Mind of the Apo-
 “ stles in what they
 “ deliver

Second Edition.

“ It remains then,
 “ that the Holy Men,
 “ whose Writings are
 “ here subjoined, were
 “ not only instructed
 “ by such as were
 “ Inspired, but were
 “ themselves, *in some*
 “ *measure,* Inspired too,
 “ And therefore we
 “ must conclude, that
 “ they *were not only*
 “ *not mistaken in what*
 “ *they deliver to us as*
 “ *the*

“ deliver to us as the “ *the Gospel of Christ,*
 “ Gospel of Christ, “ *but in all the neces-*
 “ but were not capable “ *sary Parts of it were*
 “ of doing it. By Con- “ *so assisted by the Ho-*
 “ sequence, that we “ *ly Ghost, as to be*
 “ ought to look upon “ *scarcely capable of*
 “ their Writings, tho’ “ *being much, if at all,*
 “ not of equal Autho- “ *mistaken in it. By*
 “ rity with those, “ *Consequence, &c.*
 “ which we call in a
 “ singular manner,
 “ *The Holy Scriptures,*
 “ &c.

Your Correspondent says, ‘ He conceives, in
 ‘ *some measure Inspired*, is different from *In-*
 ‘ *spired.*’ I conceive, that he who is in *some*
measure Inspired, must be *Inspired*. The
 Words in *some measure*, are softning Words;
 but they are, you see, added in an Edition
 in which I did not know any such Corrections
 were made. Agen, says he, ‘ *were not capa-*
 ‘ *ble of doing it,*’ are Words very different
 from these, ‘ *in all the necessary Parts of it*
 ‘ *[the Gospel] were so assisted by the Holy*
 ‘ *Ghost, as to be scarcely capable of being much,*
 ‘ *if at all, mistaken in it.*’ Very different
 Words

Words, I own ; they are *healing* Words, which I knew nothing of.

The next Proposition is, That their Writings ‘ *have a more than Human, tho’ a less than Divine Authority :*’ For which I refer to what is cited from p. 175 in my 25th Page. The Variations of the two Editions follow.

First Edition,
p. 175.

[Their Writings]
“ — have received
“ *a more than Hu-*
“ *man Approbation ;*
“ and ought to be
“ looked upon by us,
“ *tho’ not of equal Au-*
“ *thority* with those
“ Books which they
“ have delivered to us
“ *as strictly Canonical,*
“ yet as — contain-
“ ing the true and
“ pure

Second Edition,
p. 122, 123.

— “ Have recei-
“ *ved the highest Hu-*
“ *man Approbation ;*
“ and ought to be
“ looked upon by us,
“ *tho’ not of equal*
“ *Authority* with those
“ Books which the
“ same Church has
“ delivered to us as
“ *strictly Canonical,*
“ yet as — contain-
“ ing the true and
C “ pure

“ pure <i>Faith of Christ,</i>	“ pure <i>Doctrine of</i>
“ <i>without the least Er-</i>	“ <i>Christ, without the</i>
“ <i>ror intermix'd with</i>	“ <i>Mixture of any of</i>
“ <i>it.</i>	“ <i>those Errors, which</i>
	“ <i>have since been so</i>
	“ <i>unhappily brought in-</i>
	“ <i>to the Church.</i>

The Sense of this Passage, as cited by me from the First Edition, I supposed to be, that these Writings had *a more than Human, tho' a less than Divine Authority*. For what else is it to have received *a more than Human Approbation*, and yet *not be of equal Authority* with the Canonical Scriptures? His Grace, I suppose, was sensible of this, when he changed the Words, *a more than Human Approbation*, into *the highest Human Approbation*; which is entirely altering the Sense of the whole Sentence. If I had seen this Second Edition, I confess my Representation of the Sentence would have been *Criminal*.

There is nothing more in your Correspondent's Letter unobserved, but what follows:
 “ For all what this Writer urges, there may
 “ be

“ be different Degrees of Inspiration and Au-
 “ thority. This seems to me to be plainly
 “ intimated, *Rom. xii. 6.* and *1 Cor. xii.*
 “ 4, 11.

I have no-where affirmed, that there cannot be different Degrees of Inspiration and Authority. I have affirmed ‘ that one Inspired Writing cannot be of greater or less Authority than another.’ And I have given my Reasons, which, when they are answered, I’ll part with my Assertion.

Nothing appears from *Rom. xii. 6.* or *1 Cor. xii. 4, 11.* but that there were extraordinary Gifts and Endowments of different Kinds; and that tho’ some of these Endowments were greater than others, yet they were all equally derived from the Holy Ghost. He would be a bad Logician who should argue thus;
 ‘ The extraordinary Gifts and Endowments
 ‘ of the Holy Ghost were of different
 ‘ Kinds, some greater than others: Therefore
 ‘ one Inspired Writing may be of greater Authority than another.

To entitle any Writing to the Character of Inspired, it is necessary that the Author should have been endowed with an Infallible Knowledge of the Will of God in the Things concerning which he writes. Let his other extraordinary Gifts be what they will, they make no Difference. If he be Infallible, then have his Writings a Divine Authority, tho' he have no other extraordinary Gifts, tho' he have neither the Gift of Tongues, or of Healing, or any other. If he has all these other Gifts, yet if he has not an Infallible Knowledge of the Will of God, his Writings can have no Divine Authority, nor, properly speaking, be called Inspired. He may, in some Sense, be called Inspired, from the Gifts of the Spirit, with which he is endued; but he cannot be called an *Inspired Writer*. This is the Requisite to imprint a Divine Character on Writings, the *Infallibility* of the Writer. One Man cannot be more Infallible than another in the Things in which he is Infallible. Therefore, one Writing cannot be Inspired in less or greater measure than another; nor one Inspired Writing have less or more Authority than another.

If I am in an Error, I will thank your Correspondent for shewing me it. If I find Errors in other People's Writings, I shall make no Scruple of shewing them. I found a Mistake in the Arch-Bishop's Writings, and I shewed it. That it was a Mistake, his Grace had, unknown to me, confessed, and, *in some measure*, corrected it. *In some measure*, I say: For we are still told, ' The Apostolical Fathers were Inspired, and ' that their Writings are an Authoritative ' Declaration of the Gospel to us.

When I consider the Arch-Bishop as in an Error, I pay no Deference to his Station. I hope I shall always prefer Truth to Authority. I always observe Errors, without any Respect of Persons. I will take notice of them in *All Persons*. I will use *no Person* ill for them. I would no more treat an Inferior ill, for being in an Error, than I would the Arch-Bishop. I will always, to the best of my Skill, avoid treating Arch-Bishops, or the meanest Writers, in a *rude* and *shocking* manner. I make it my Endeavour to be free from Passion and Prejudice, and from the least

least Approach to *Bitterness* or *Ungoverned Zeal*. I am not at all conscious of having wrote any thing in my Paper to the *Prolocutor* unbecoming either a *Christian* or a *Gentleman* ; two Characters, which, together with that of *Englishman*, are, and I hope always will be, Dear to your Correspondent's, and,

Dear S I R,

Your most sincere Friend,



and humble Servant,

* * * *

P. S. To prevent any farther Mistakes or Misunderstanding concerning this Matter, I desire you would take Care this LETTER be Printed as speedily as possible.

F I N I S.





Lately Published,

A *Protestation* made on the 14th Day of *February*, 17¹⁷/₈, in Behalf of the King's Supremacy and the Protestant Doctrines Asserted and Maintain'd in the Lord Bishop of *Bangor's* Sermon, preach'd before His Majesty, on *March* the 31st, 1717, and published by His Majesty's Special Command. Together with what was said in the Lower House of Convocation, with relation to the said *Protestation*, and other Matters that are fit to be consider'd; and what would have been further said, had not the *Prolocutor* interrupted Dr. *Tenison* while he was speaking, by reading the Schedule of Prorogation. The Second Edition. Sold by *J. Wyat*.

A Letter to the Reverend the *Prolocutor*: Being an Answer to a Paper, Advertised as Published in the *Post-Boy* of *April* 3d, 1718. intituled, *A Letter from the Prolocutor, to the Reverend Dr. Edward Tenison Arch-Deacon of Carmarthen*. By a Gentleman of *Cambridge*. Sold by *J. Roberts*.



